**A forgotten global arc behind America's anthem. By Zaheer M. Ali. August 22, 2026**

Most people think the American Revolution was shaped only in places like Boston and Yorktown. But the birth of the United States was tied to battles thousands of miles away in 18th-century India. Three forgotten links show how India's fight for freedom influenced America's own struggle.

**1. The Boston Tea Party and Bengal**: In the 1760s, the Bengali Nawab Mir Qasim fought the British East India Company. His intercepted letters describing corporate abuse and the economic ruin of Bengal were printed in Boston newspapers. American colonists realized that the same Company was about to impose its monopoly on them. This awareness helped spark the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

**2. A Muslim Ruler and an American Warship:** By 1782, Americans were following the victories of Sultan Hyder Ali of Mysore, who was defeating British armies in India. Pennsylvania honored him by naming a 16-gun state warship **Hyder-Ally**. Under Lt. Joshua Barney, it won one of the most brilliant naval victories of the Revolutionary War. Hyder Ali became a symbol of global resistance to British rule.

**3. The Rockets' Red Glare:** Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan developed iron-cased rockets that shocked British forces. The British captured these weapons, reverse-engineered them, and produced the Congreve Rocket. During the War of 1812, Britain fired these Indian-designed rockets at Baltimore. Francis Scott Key saw their explosions and wrote the anthem line **"the rockets' red glare."**

**Takeaway:** History is not lived in silos. The struggle for freedom in India shaped American political thought, inspired American fighters, and even influenced the weapons that appear in the U.S. national anthem. The two revolutions were part of the same global contest against imperial power.